



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**APPROVED**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**City of Fort Lauderdale**  
**Community Services Board**  
**November 14, 2019 – 4:00 P.M.**  
**City Commission Chambers, City Hall**  
**Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

**October 2019-September 2020**

<b>MEMBERS</b>		<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Noah Szugajew, Chair	P	2	0
April Kirk, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Jonathan Bennett	P	2	0
Elizabeth Cupido	P	2	0
Christina Disbrow	A	1	1
Mary Kinirons	A	1	1
Richard Morris	P	2	0
Christi Rice	P	2	0
Terra Sickler	P	2	0
Marisol Simon	P	2	0
Dana Somerstein	P	1	1

**Staff Present**

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager  
Simone Flores, Housing Coordinator  
Lisa Tayar, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communication to the City Commission**

None.

**I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

- **Quorum Requirement – As of November 8, 2019, there are 11 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Szugajew called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present at the meeting.

**II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS**

The Board and Staff members present introduced themselves at this time.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 14, 2019**

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Kirk, seconded by Mr. Bennett, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

#### **V. CDBG**

- **Updates, Performance Outcomes for FY 18-19**
  - **HOPE Fair Housing**

Charmaine Williams, representing HOPE, Inc., explained that the organization is a fair housing center that deals with housing discrimination complaints. They have worked with the city of Fort Lauderdale, and with local housing providers, for more than five years. They provide education and outreach on the federal Fair Housing Act, as well as training for housing providers who have been sued.

#### **IV. CSB BUSINESS**

- **Meeting dates for the new year**

Vice Chair Kirk recommended that the process for attending meetings via telephone be improved, as it can be difficult for individuals to hear the meeting via phone. This would allow members to attend telephonically if they are unavailable for specific meeting dates. Ms. Williams replied that she would communicate this concern to the City's Information Technology (IT) Department.

#### **VI. HOPWA**

- **Agency Performance Outcomes**

Sharon Alveranga-Jones, Permanent Housing Placement (PHP) Coordinator for Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC), stated that the PHP program provides move-in assistance with rent, utilities, and deposits to individuals who are homeless or in unstable housing. The PHP program has reviewed 138 unduplicated clients and processed 149 applications.

Regarding the Short-Term Mortgage, Rent, and Utilities (STRMU) assistance program, BRHPC helps individuals whose rent, mortgage, or utility payments are past due. They have assisted 257 unduplicated clients and processed 426 applications. All Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) funds were used during the fiscal year.

BRHPC conducts financial literacy workshops to educate clients on the importance of budgeting and money management skills. STRMU clients are required to apply for at least 20 jobs within a one-month period. Clients are also referred to Career Source Broward to enhance their job-seeking skills, including interviewing and resume writing.

Rhode Rosulme-Rock, also representing BRHPC, stated that the Tenant-Based Rental Voucher (TBRV) program assists individuals and families with HIV/AIDs who have low incomes. They currently serve 90 clients, including three new clients who have moved into the program from the waiting list.

Each month, clients who are not working attend a mandatory debt consolidation workshop. It is recommended that clients with jobs also attend at least two of these workshops throughout the year. BRHPC provides information to guide clients through the process of seeking new housing, as well as assistance with resumes and mock interviews. Their current focus is on individuals who are not working or have difficulty maintaining a job.

Mr. Morris asked how long the 87 continuing clients have been served by the TBRV program. Ms. Rosulme-Rock estimated that most clients have participated in this program since 2013. BRHPC works with many clients who receive Social Security to help them bring in more income.

Tiffany Arieagus, Director of Housing Case Management for SunServe, stated that SunServe is currently exceeding their contractual obligations. They can provide housing case management services in five languages, allowing them to accommodate more clients. At present, the agency's revenue does not cover the full cost of the case management program; however, they have made up the difference through private fundraising. 94% of funding goes directly to case management services.

From October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019, 467 clients were served, including 96 unduplicated STRMU clients and 272 unduplicated applications for an authorized amount of \$120,286.77. The PHP program has served 65 unduplicated clients and submitted 86 unduplicated applications for an authorized amount of \$78,349.

In the last 30 days, housing case management has served 73 unduplicated clients, 51 of whom received face-to-face services. Each of these clients met with their case managers approximately 4.3 times per month. Other clients were contacted via telephone and referred to additional services for legal assistance, substance abuse and mental health services, and/or transitional housing.

Edwin Cordova, representing Legal Aid Services of Broward County, reported that the agency received \$180,000 in HOPWA funds, of which 99.45% has been spent. In 2018/2019, they have served 265 unduplicated clients. He explained that most clients do not seek services for one issue only: when a new client comes to Legal Aid, the organization determines the issues they are facing and which ones can be addressed by Legal Aid.

Mr. Cordova advised that of the 265 clients served, some are also able to receive assistance from other organizations. In the event that clients do not qualify for services

from partner agencies, Legal Aid has obtained additional grants that can be used to assist them. These grants are typically used as a last resort.

Most Legal Aid clients present with landlord/tenant issues. The agency often assists with evictions, as the lack of affordable housing in Broward County can make it difficult for a client to move upon short notice. Legal Aid also provides services for foreclosures and eviction notice issues.

Ms. Somerstein asked if Legal Aid is working proactively with other organizations to reach out to potential clients who may be within the eviction notice period. Mr. Cordova replied that SunServe, Care Resource, and other partner agencies refer clients to Legal Aid as soon as possible if this issue arises.

Francisco Gomez, Housing Services Manager for Care Resource, explained that this agency has received HOPWA funds since 2014. They saw 731 clients during fiscal year (FY) 2018-2019. Clients participated in the PHP and STRMU programs. Since March 2019, Care Resource has referred several individuals who do not qualify for HOPWA assistance to Broward County's rapid re-housing program or the Ryan White Part B program. He estimated that 150 unduplicated clients were referred to these services.

Mr. Morris asked if Care Resource has fully expended the HOPWA funds it was awarded. Mr. Gomez confirmed this. The organization has 3.5 housing case managers and receives some funds from other programs to support them. Clients who do not qualify for case management or do not need full case management services are referred to other agencies, such as Legal Aid.

Ms. Williams advised that representatives of Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO) and Broward House were unable to attend today's meeting due to prior engagements.

- **Assessment Tool**

Ms. Williams asked that discussion of the intake assessment tool be postponed, as many members of the working group were unable to attend today's meeting due to prior commitments. There is still no HOPWA contract from the state thus far regarding additional funds. This contract is anticipated in mid-December 2019.

- **Update on State HOPWA Funding**

Fort Lauderdale is compiling HOPWA information for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which has not yet gone through testing to validate data; however, the agencies have unofficially reported leveraging approximately \$1.8 million in non-HOPWA resources toward medical assistance, substance abuse, and other support. These dollars were provided through private funding/donations and other community grants.

Ms. Williams continued that agencies participated in a recent webinar regarding the HOPWA Modernization Act. This Act provides a better formula for the funding of the HOPWA program at the national level: while the previous formula looked at AIDS cases, the new formula looks at the rate of new HIV infection. The HOPWA Modernization Act is currently in its third year. Although Fort Lauderdale and Broward County were scheduled to lose up to 5% of their overall funding, this has not happened.

By FY 2021, Fort Lauderdale/Broward could expect to receive level funding from that point on; however, Congress is willing to continue funding the program at a level that would keep programs whole for clients already participating. While the City has hoped to phase out the voucher program due to increasing rents and eviction rates, the recent webinar suggested that the rest of the country is moving in another direction by moving away from project-based housing and toward tenant-based rental vouchers, which means clients may use their vouchers to live anywhere on the open market. The City may revisit this program to determine how it can be best used for clients.

The HOPWA Modernization Act also removes the earned income disregard, which means agencies will no longer be allowed not to count income from clients who are going back to work after a period of unemployment. This works against both the clients and the HOPWA program. As the comment period for this change is currently open, Ms. Williams encouraged the HOPWA providers to speak in favor of allowing the earned income disregard to continue. The community must also determine how to present this change as a positive development for clients.

Ms. Williams advised that the City should still move forward with the provision of extra case management funding as approved at the October 2019 meeting. She recommended, however, that if the state funding is provided, the Board may wish to reconsider how to best subsidize that funding with reserves.

Chair Szugajew pointed out that for years, the Board has funded a project-based system, and is now being asked to think about changing to another option, which could be difficult for provider agencies. Ms. Williams emphasized that there will be a need to hold public forums in which to discuss this potential change and hear wider community input. She estimated that any change would be projected five or more years into the future and must take the unique characteristics of the Fort Lauderdale/Broward community into account. Because the City is a beachfront community with a high rate of homelessness, the need for transitional housing can be expected to remain high.

Ms. Williams advised that she would provide the Board members with a full description of all the services currently offered using HOPWA funding. She also recommended that they review what is being done elsewhere in the state of Florida as well as throughout the broader U.S.

Mr. Morris commented that in recent years, the Board's thinking has evolved to push funding in the direction of project-based housing. The Board has also discussed the possibility of a public-private partnership (P3) that would encourage mixed-use rather than project-based housing. He asked how this might be best communicated to the City. Ms. Williams proposed beginning through discussions with current project-based HOPWA providers, as many of these agencies are willing to try new programs that target different communities of need.

Mr. Morris also asked if HOPWA funding might be able to bring new providers to the table so they can attempt more innovative uses of funds, such as mixed-use development. Ms. Williams explained that at present, the Board is locked into the current system and cannot bring in new providers; however, she reiterated that the Board may wish to revisit the distribution of "rollover" dollars.

Vice Chair Kirk recalled that the Board has discussed options such as "tiny homes," mixed-use properties, and meeting with the City Commission and/or the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC). She felt multiple parties, including the Legal and Planning and Zoning Departments, should be brought to the table to discuss options for residents of Fort Lauderdale. Ms. Williams cautioned the Board to keep in mind that Community Services Board (CSB) funding has federal restrictions within which many developers do not wish to work.

Mr. Morris asked for information on the possibility that the City may not receive the additional state HOPWA funds discussed at previous meetings, and whether contingency plans should be made for the rollout of these funds if their time frame is constrained. Ms. Williams replied that the Board may have to decide whether or not it is still feasible to accept these funds, as a constrained time frame could lessen the impact those dollars could have on the community. Because some of the HOPWA funds come from the federal government, the deadline for their expenditure cannot be changed.

The Board discussed opportunities for change to meet the needs of the community, including the possible use of properties being leased by the City, as well as the potential for additional policy changes. Ms. Williams advised that she would send information on the state HOPWA funding to the members for review, but suggested that the Board may also wish to consider Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Public Services dollars as a possible source of funding.

## **VII. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Vice Chair Kirk asked when the Board could expect to receive a report from Turnstone Development. Ms. Williams replied that Turnstone's funding for FY 2018-2019 was for a gate, which has been completed. They are no longer participating in the CDBG Public Services program.

Vice Chair Kirk asserted that it is unfortunate the City Commission has not yet scheduled a meeting with the CSB despite multiple requests over several months. She pointed out that the CSB is neither listed on the City Commission's calendar nor televised, which she felt was inappropriate considering the importance of the work they do for the community.

#### **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

#### **IX. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

Chair Szugajew stated that the assessment tool and additional HOPWA discussion would be on the December 2019 Agenda. Ms. Williams added that links to the two primary grants overseen by the CSB would be provided for the new members as well.

Mr. Morris advised that December 1, 2019 is World Aids Day. The County will hold events on Monday, December 2, in addition to various events leading up to this day.

#### **X. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION**

None.

#### **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]